

Pharma industry urges fairer vaccine access in future

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The pharmaceutical industry on Tuesday proposed a system to allow for more equitable access to vaccines and treatments in future pandemics, saying it was willing to set aside doses to distribute to lower-income

countries.

The Covid-19 pandemic has seen a wide gap in [vaccination rates](#) between wealthy and less well-off countries, sparking demands from several countries for intellectual property rights on vaccines to be lifted.

IFPMA, a group that represents pharmaceutical firms around the world, has strongly opposed those measures, saying they would not solve the core problem.

The Geneva-based group instead proposed a framework to governments and international organisations aimed at improving "the real-time delivery of vaccines, treatments and diagnostics for priority populations in lower-income countries, as determined by [health authorities](#), for future pandemics," it said in a statement on Tuesday.

"Even now, when there is an abundance of vaccines available, quite a few countries have a vaccination rate of only 10 percent of their population," IFPMA head Thomas Cueni told AFP.

"Industry cannot do it alone, it requires a social contract," Cueni said.

Wealthy countries must "be ready to say that they cannot supply exclusively to themselves," he added.

IFPMA, whose members include Covid vaccine makers such as Pfizer, Moderna and AstraZeneca, called the proposal the Berlin declaration.

"The success of the proposal requires open borders and no trade restrictions," it said.

The group also called for a network of clinical sites to be set up across the world to support the rapid deployment of new treatments and

vaccines.

Jose Manuel Barroso, the head of the Gavi vaccine alliance, welcomed the proposal, urging world leaders to "engage with industry on how to make this work".

"The industry's commitment to reserve part of production of vaccines and treatments at real time for vulnerable populations in low-income countries provides an opportunity to work together strategically to forge a new social contract," he said in the statement.

IFPMA also maintained that intellectual property rights "should be respected since society depends on them to stimulate innovation and the scale up of supply".

Since 2020, South African and India have been among nations calling for [intellectual property rights](#) for coronavirus vaccines to be lifted so they can boost production.

In June, the World Trade Organization agreed to temporarily lift Covid [vaccine](#) patents in a rare, largely symbolic act that was criticised by IFPMA.

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